UNITED STATES KARATE ALLIANCE

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OLD & NEW FACES TAKE HOME ALLIANCE CUP TROPHIES AT 2000 NATIONALS

by Rick Nathanson, 7th Dan

Some veterans and some rookies shared the winner's circle at the United States Karate Alliance 2000 Nationals, held in Albuquerque in April.

John Pat Bullock of Louisiana, a student of Dr. David Jordan and a member of the Alliance Hall of Fame, repeated his feat of last year to win the Men's Black Belt Kumite Grand Championship. It was his sixth Grand Championship from Nationals, and the fourth in a row.

Fellow Hall of Famer Guy Holtzman, of Palm Springs, Calif., again was the Grand Champion in the Black Belt Empty Hand Kata competition, a feat he has repeated five times in the last seven years.

The Women's Black Belt Kumite Grand Championship went to Anna Chalamidas, of Albuquerque, a student of Mark Gorman. It was the first major win at Nationals for the new black belt.

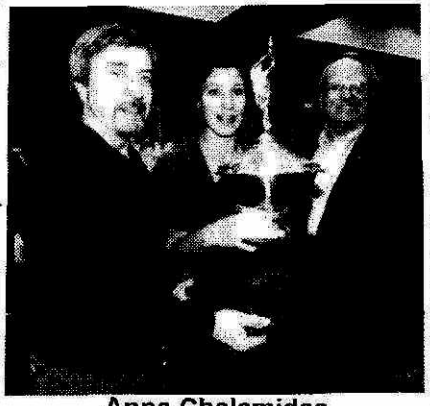
Nationals was double the excitement for Christina Van Gieson, who studies under Maria Evans in Riverside, Calif. Ms. Van Gieson took home two Alliance Cup trophies -- one for her Grand Championship win in Adult Kyu Forms, and the other in Adult Kyu Weapons Forms.

Her teammate, Karen Gomez, was also a first-time winner, taking home a Grand Champion Alliance Cup trophy in the Junior Beginning Forms competition.

Veterans of the USKA tournament circuit took the remaining Alliance Cup Grand Champion trophies. Among them were Dean Patin of Riverside, Calif., who won Junior Advanced Kata; Chris Otwell of Ruston, La., Junior Advanced Weapons Kata; and Mr. C. Bruce Heilman, of Reading, Pa., Black Belt Weapons Kata.

The annual USKA National Tournament and Seminar Series, held this year at the Crowne Plaza Pyramid Hotel, drew nearly 500 competitors and about 1,500 spectators. The well attended seminars were led by Fumio Demura, who took participants through techniques to enhance kata and kumite abilities; C. Bruce and Ann-Marie Heilman, on traditional long and short Okinawan weapons; Maria Evans, teaching self defense for instructor certification; Dana Abbott, on Chanbara Techniques; and Lee Kittell on judge and referee certification.

John Pat Bullock



Anna Chalamidas

Arguably, some of the biggest thrills for both participants and spectators, was the final kumite eliminations and Grand Champion matches. The men's fights were spirited throughout, with various pairings of John Pat Bullock, Eddie Bethea, Lee Kittell, Joe Dupaquier, Randy Sanders and Drake Sass.

Christina VanGieson

The Grand Champion finals came down to Mr. Bethea, a Shorin-Ryu stylist from Indiana, scoring with a punch to Mr. Bullock, a Tae Kwon Do stylist from Louisiana. Mr. Bullock returned the compliment with one of his trademark side kicks and then scored with a second one in overtime to win the title.

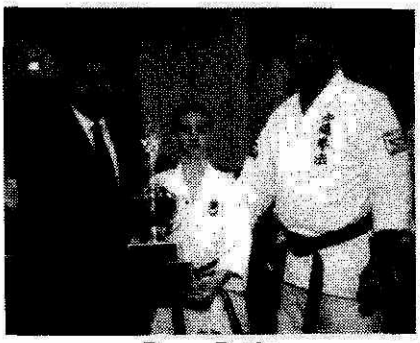
"I wasn't supposed to give you that much room," Mr. Bethea told Mr. Bullock after the fight, when an observer asked what the turning point was. "I didn't take advantage of an opportunity late in the fight when the score was tied and John Pat was in the gap."

"This is a one-day snapshot," said Mr. Bullock , 28, of his win over his 56-year-old Hall of Fame colleague. "It's not an age thing," Mr. Bullock said. "It's about two individuals who really love martial arts and love each other, and there's a great mutual respect. We both want to win, and we both know it."

But winning or losing is not that important in the big scheme of things, said Mr. Bethea. "God gave me karate, first to help me find myself, and second, to help me help other people find themselves."

Karen Gomez

"I hope he and I touched at least one individual's life in a positive way today," added Mr. Bullock. "Maybe we helped inspire just one person. We know we're role models, and that's a responsibility we take seriously."


Dean Patin

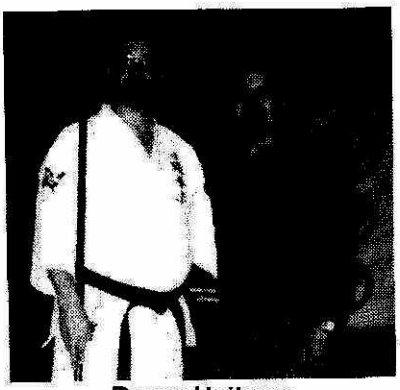
The women's fights were every bit as exciting. Ms. Chalamidas, a Shotokan stylist, won the women's title after matches with Monique Dupaquier and defending National's champion Cassandra Shults. Ms. Chalamidas has gained a reputation in a relatively short time as strong fighter who can both hit hard and take a punch. She noted that she is used to fighting men in her dojo, so her strength has been an asset, as has been her height, which she said gave her a reach advantage over her two finals opponents.

Chris Otwell

Ms. Chalamidas came to Albuquerque four years ago from her native Greece. She began studying karate at the University of New Mexico under Mark Gorman and his sensei, Gary Purdue. She was promoted to shodan in November.

Ms. Van Gieson, a Shuri Ryu stylist, studies under Maria Evans in Riverside, Calif. The first of Ms. Van Gieson's two Grand Champion wins was for her performance of Bassai Dai in the empty hand kata competition. "It's a strong kata and it's a long kata, so it's more difficult and more of a test of endurance," she said. And because of the kata's strength and length, "it may work to my advantage when I'm presenting it to judges."

A relatively new brown belt, Ms. Van Gieson's winning weapons kata was Chatanyara No Kun. She is particularly fond of this bo kata because "it has a jump, in which you spin around in the air while doing two hand changes," she said. "I know I'll be on this form for a long time because it's a black belt form, so I've got a lot of time to grow into it."



Bruce Heilman

Her two Grand Champion wins are not only her first from Nationals, but also her very first from any tournament. "I never expect to win," she said. "I just go out there do the best I can, and whatever happens, happens."

Guy Holtzman

Karen Gomez, won her Junior Beginning Forms Grand Champion trophy with a performance of Wansu. The 15-year-old yellow belt has been studying karate under Ms. Evans for about nine months, and Nationals was her first "really big tournament," she said. "Regionals and state were large, but not as tough as this," she said. "People had to qualify, so they had to earn their place to compete. I was more nervous just about being here than I was about performing."

Fifteen-year-old Dean Patin, also from Riverside, Calif., won the Junior Advanced Kata Grand Championship with his performance of Unsu. Mr. Patin, a Shotokan stylist, said he chose Unsu as his tournament kata because it's the same one his sensei, Kevin Warner, also uses for tournaments. "I like the jump in it," he said. "I can visualize someone attacking with a sword to the knee level or hip, and then jumping over the sword and striking the opponent's head with a crescent kick."

Mr. Patin has been working Unsu for more than three years, and he has won with it before. This was his third Grand Championship from Nationals. He was also a Grand Championship winner at World in 1998.

Twelve-year-old Tae-Kwon-Do stylist Chris Otwell won the Junior Advanced Weapons Grand Champion trophy with his performance of Pyong An Bo. Mr. Otwell, who studies under Buster Cotten, said the kata is the most advanced bo form in his system, and the one that his instructor also runs. Mr. Otwell estimated he has

won 15-20 Grand Champion trophies during his years in karate, but only this one from Nationals. He seems to have adopted a Zen approach with respect to tournament competition: "I wasn't expecting to win or to lose," he said. "I just got out there and did it."

Mr. Heilman, an Okinawan Kenpo Karate Kobudo practitioner, won Grand Champion in the Black Belt Weapons Kata competition with his performance of Hima Igiri No Kun, Ichi and Ni.

By putting two katas together, Mr. Heilman said, he was paying respect to his sensei, Seikichi Odo, who traditionally put two katas together for demonstration purposes. "Many of the bo katas of most of the Okinawan lineages tend to be power oriented. Putting these two katas together shows power, speed and flow, in addition to showing usage of the full range of the weapon."

Mr. Heilman, a member of the Alliance Hall of Fame, called the competition at Nationals "excellent." He added that "the sportsmanship and the brotherhood and sisterhood that's shown is noticeable to anyone watching. We all root for each other. Winning isn't everything. It's the sharing and the challenge. We feed off each other."

Winning may not be everything, but Alliance Hall of Fame member Guy Holtzman sure does a lot of it. Mr. Holtzman, a Matsumura Seito stylist, won the Black Belt Kata Grand Championship at Nationals in

National Finalists march into ballroom, led by Guy Holtzman, to begin competition.

1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, and now 2000.

Mr. Holtzman is a student of John Hutchcroft and Phillip Koeppel. He performed Hakutsuru, an empty hand kata that he learned from Roy Oyakawa.

"It's a White Crane form," he explained. "A lot of old karate is White Crane-influenced. It depicts the movement of the crane. There are soft and hard movements, but no punching. It's all open hand techniques, which is a higher form of the art."

James Hawkes, Co-director of the Alliance was pleased with the quality of competitors the Nationals drew to the competition floor at the Crowne Plaza Pyramid Hotel ballroom. It seems that events of this caliber draw out the best in its particiapnts.

COMPETITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD PREPARE FOR THE 2000 USKA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2000 United States Karate Alliance World Championships is bringing competitors from many parts of the world. So far, we look forward to teams from Argentina, Spain, Brazil, Germany, West Indies, Peru, Philippines, France, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, and more.

The World Championships will be held Thursday, July 27th through Sunday, July 30th in New Orleans, Louisiana. Over 175 divisions will be offered at the World Championships encompassing Kata, Kumite, Kobudo, Koshiki, Groung Grappling, Adult & Youth 3 person Kata and Team Kumite, Continuous Sparring, Continuous Team Sparring, Musical Forms, and our new national point division – Sport Chanbara. There's something for everyone at the World Championships.

The National Awards Banquet will be held on Saturday, July 29th, to recognize the top ten USKA nationally ranked competitors in tournament competition sanctioned by the United States Karate Alliance. The top ten nationally ranked competitors will receive certificates, and the top three will receive a trophy. The banquet will be attended by numerous international guests and dignitaries including Fumio Demura, German Bermudez – Argentina, Jose Guiral – Spain, Phillip Koeppel – USKK, Glenn Keeney – PKC, Herb Johnson, Bruce Heilmna – IKKF, and more. You can reserve your banquet ticket on the World Championships registration form.

Secure your special World Championship room rates of ONLY $82.00 for a single; $88.00 for a double, triple, and quad, plus tax, by calling the **Radisson Hotel** New Orleans by calling **1-800-333-3333** between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00

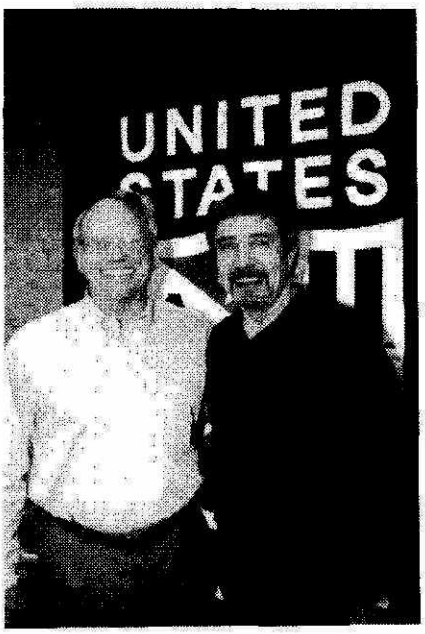
p.m. by July 14, 2000, and making your room reservations. Be sure to mention the United States Karate Alliance World Championships to secure your special room rate.

Southwest Airlines is offering a 10% discount on most of its already low fares, for travel to and from the 2000 United States Karate Alliance World Championships. You or your travel agent may call the Southwest Airlines Group and Meeting Reservations at **1-800-433-5368,** Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. by no later than five days prior to the first date of travel and refer to the **I.D. Code A1903** to take advantage of this offer. Call right away as fares are subject to terms and availability.

Alamo Rent-A-Car is honored to be selected as the official car rental company for the 2000 World Championships in New Orleans. To receive special group rates, attendees must call Alamo's toll-free 24-hour reservation number, **1-800-732-3232** and request the following: **Rate Code: GR**; **Group I.D. Number: 594221**.

We look forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

THANK YOU



The Directors of the United States Karate Alliance, James H. Hawkes and Dr. David Jordan, would like say "Thank you" to all those who helped to make the 2000 Nationals and Annual Seminar such a success. All referees, judges, score keepers, time keepers, instructors, assistants, and volunteers who helped make this a smooth running tournament. We recognize that if these people did not give of their time so unselfishly, it would not have run so smoothly. Thank you all!

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